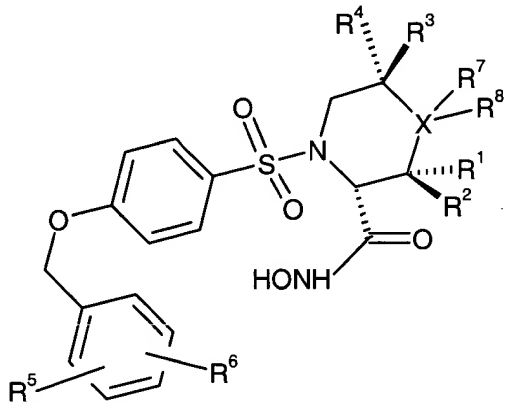
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15 (canceled).

16. (currrently amended) A method for treating a medical condition of the type that is characterized by the destruction of articular cartilage in a human subject; wherein said medical condition comprises joint injury, reactive arthritis, acute pyrophosphate arthritis (pseudogout), psoriatic arthritis, osteoarthritis, or juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; which method comprises administering to the subject having, said condition a therapeutically effective amount of a compound represented by formula I:



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or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

X is ~~carbon or~~ nitrogen;

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, and methyl, wherein at least one of R^1 and R^2 is methyl;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, and methyl, or R^3 and R^4 may be taken together to form a carbonyl group; and

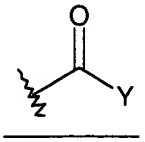
R^5 and R^6 are independent substituents in the ortho, meta, or para positions and are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halogen, cyano, methyl, and ethyl;

with the provisos:

~~when X is carbon, then R7 and R8 are both hydrogen and at least one of R1, R2, R3, and R4 is hydroxy;~~

~~when X is carbon and R5 is para-halo, then at least one of R6, R3, and R4 is not hydrogen;~~

~~when X is nitrogen, then~~ R^8 is not present and R^7 is hydrogen or a group of the formula:



wherein, Y is $-CH_2-NH_2$ or $-NH-CH_3$; and

when ~~X is nitrogen and~~ R^7 is H, then R^3 and R^4 are taken together to form a carbonyl group.

Claims 17-23 (canceled).

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein the medical condition is osteoarthritis.

25. (canceled)

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 32 ~~25~~, wherein the medical condition is osteoarthritis.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the compound is selected from the group consisting of:

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2,4-dichloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2,4-dichloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(4-fluoro-2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine- 2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2-chloro-4-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-chloro-4-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-fluoro-4-chloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(4-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*S*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(4-fluoro-2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-3-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-chloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-3-fluorobenzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-5-chloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2,4-difluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2-fluoro-5-chloro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*R*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-5-fluorobenzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-hydroxy-3-methyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide; and

(2*R*,5*R*) 1-[4-(2-bromo-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-5-hydroxy-3,3-dimethyl-piperidine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein X is nitrogen.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the medical condition is osteoarthritis.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the compound is selected from the group consisting of:

(2*R*,3*S*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-4-aminoacetyl-3-methyl-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*S*) 1-[4-(4-fluoro-2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-methyl-5-oxo-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*S*) 4-[4-(2-ethyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-methyl-4-carboxylic acid methylamide-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

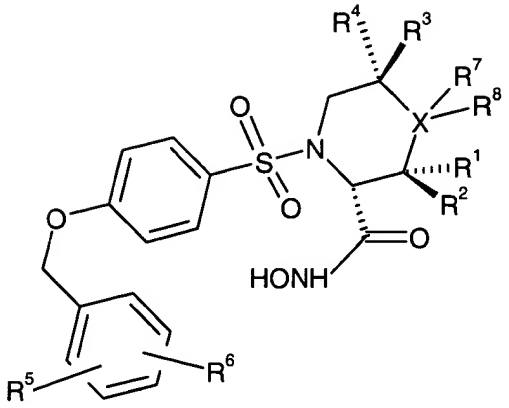
(2*R*,3*S*) 4-[4-(5-fluoro-2-methyl-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-methyl-4-carboxylic acid methylamide-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide;

(2*R*,3*S*) 1-[4-(2-methyl-5-fluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-methyl-5-oxo-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide; and

(2*R*,3*S*) 4-[4-(2,4-difluoro-benzyloxy)-benzenesulfonyl]-3-methyl-4-carboxylic acid methylamide-piperazine-2-carboxylic acid hydroxyamide.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the medical condition is psoriatic arthritis.

32. (new) A method for treating a medical condition of the type that is characterized by the destruction of articular cartilage in a human subject; wherein said medical condition comprises joint injury, reactive arthritis, acute pyrophosphate arthritis (pseudogout), psoriatic arthritis, osteoarthritis, or juvenile rheumatoid arthritis; which method comprises administering to the subject having, said condition a therapeutically effective amount of a compound represented by formula I:



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or a therapeutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein

X is carbon;

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, and methyl, wherein at least one of R^1 and R^2 is methyl;

R^3 and R^4 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, hydroxy, and methyl, or R^3 and R^4 may be taken together to form a carbonyl group; and

R^5 and R^6 are independent substituents in the ortho, meta, or para positions and are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halogen, cyano, and ethyl;

with the provisos:

R^7 and R^8 are both hydrogen and at least one of R^1, R^2, R^3, and R^4 is hydroxy;

when R^5 is para-halo, then at least one of R^6, R^3, and R^4 is not hydrogen.